

PROGRAMME

May 2002



Overture "Momchile", Introduction and Dances

L. Pipkov (1904 – 1974)

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra in A-minor, Op. 129

R Schumann (181 – 1856)

INTERVAL

Symphony No 4 in D Minor Opus. 120

R Schumann (1810 – 1856)

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Overture “Momchile”, Introduction and Dances

Lubomir Pipkov

Lubomir Pipkov was one of a very talented group of Bulgarian composers of the 1920 to 1940 era who developed the main aesthetic principles of modern Bulgarian music through their focus on the folk culture and national spirit of the times. Among this group were a few who went on to develop their own very individualistic styles, Pipkov being amongst these. He studied in Paris under Boulanger and Dukas. His works include four symphonies.

Best known for his influential opera ‘Nana’s Nine Brothers’ (1929 – 1932), it is yet through his orchestral work, such as the short excerpt we present tonight which exemplifies his fusion of rhythm, melody, folk intonation and harmonic colouration, that Pipkov earned his place among the masters of 20th century composers.

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, A-minor, Opus 129.

Robert Schumann

Soloist:

Ben Nation

Nicht zu schnell

Langsam – etwas lebhafter

Sehr lebhaft – Cadenza – Sehr lebhaft

Schumann completed the first draft of this concerto in 1850, in a little over two weeks, although it was not given its first performance until ten years later, and four years after Schumann’s death. It is regarded as the first of the great Romantic concerti for Cello, with much of it breaking with established orchestral convention. There is no orchestral exposition, the three movements are linked together, there is a “cyclic” appearance of the main theme and the cadenza in the final movement is accompanied and unusually placed at a critical point in the final movement just before the Coda.

After an introduction of only four bars, the cello enters with one of Schumann’s finest melodies. The second subject is full of Romantic imagery and the language of “longing” – minor sevenths appoggiaturas and suspensions was later to influence Wagner and Schoenberg. The development is full of interplay, with the introduction of a sinisterly disturbing staccato triplet figure frequently repeated by the orchestra

Ben Nation

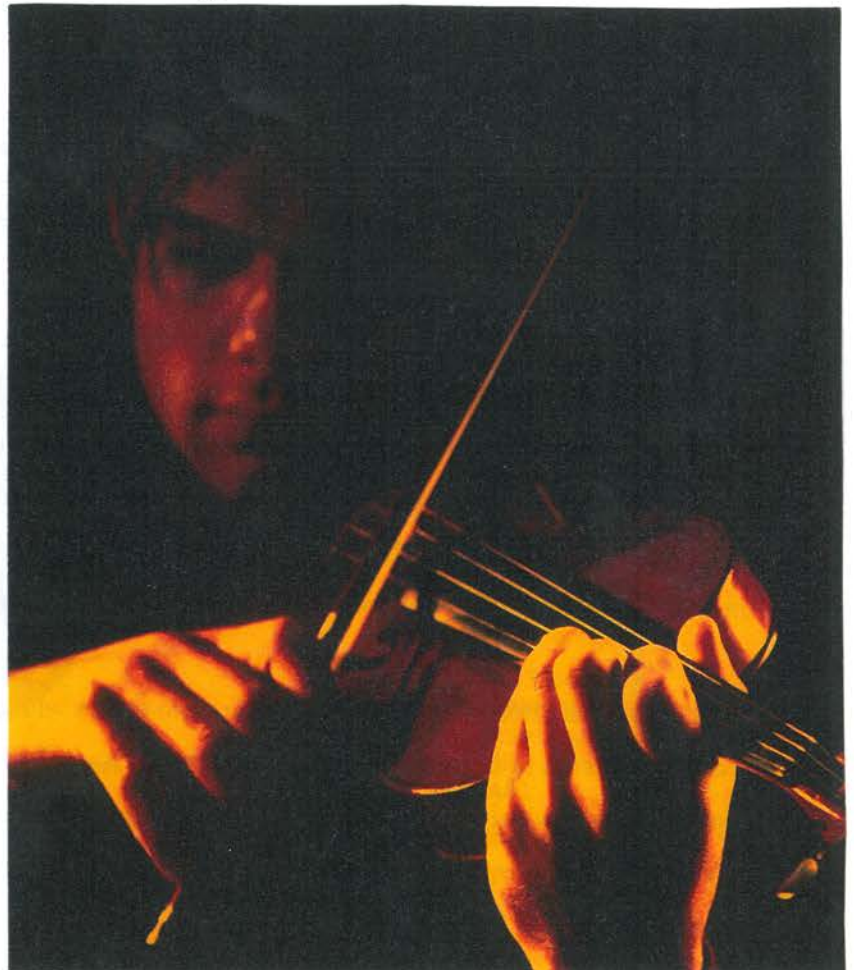
Ben Nation is in his Honours year of his Bachelor of Music Performance degree, studying with Jim Tennant at Auckland University. He completed the first two years of his degree at Waikato University, where he was awarded a string-players scholarship and was the lead cello of the Waikato University Orchestra. He has been lead cellist of the TWSO and a member of the National Youth Orchestra and is currently lead cellist of the Auckland Youth Orchestra. He has appeared as a soloist with the Rotorua Lake District Chamber Orchestra and the Waikato University Orchestra. He has played in Masterclasses with Alexander Ivashkin and Maria Klegel and last year was a semi-finalist in the Rotorua National Recital Competition. Recently he received a Senior Prize in Music from Auckland University.



James Carter

James Carter, our orchestra leader, is currently studying at the University of Auckland in the B.Mus Honours programme under Mary O'Brien. As well as playing in the WSO, he plays with the Auckland Chamber Orchestra, Opus Chamber Ensemble and occasionally with the Bach Musica NZ and Piper's Symphonia.

After completing his studies with Mary he will be auditioning for the Student Internship Programme with the Auckland Philharmonia.



JOACHIM ATANASSOV



Joachim Atanassov was born in Sofia. He completed his musical education as a Violinist and Conductor from the Bulgarian Academy of Music under Professor Leon Surujon and then further developed his playing in Professor Stefan Magnev's Chamber music class and conducting in Professor Kazanjiev's class.

Joachim Atanassov won a brilliant reputation as a conductor, concert performer and as a music teacher. He has played Chamber music as a member of The Bulgarian Chamber Duo and The Bulgarian Classical Trio. He has been conductor, guest soloist and first violinist of The Studio Concertante Orchestra of Sofia and many other famous Bulgarian Symphony and Chamber Orchestras. He has been a permanent guest soloist, leader, conductor and adviser of the Haydn Symphony Orchestra in Italy. He has performed in many countries in Europe and North and South America. He has made numerous audio, video and CD recordings for Bulgarian Radio and TV, for the Italian Radio and TV, Radio Suisse Romande, AMUS and GEGA.

Joachim Atanassov is a Professor of Violin and Conducting at the Bulgarian Academy of Music in Sofia and his students have been prize winners in several national and international competitions. Since 1990 he has taught at the School of Music Valletta and at the University of Malta, where he is transmitting his great musical knowledge in lessons of violin, conducting, chamber music and orchestra playing in master courses and other related activities. He is also adviser of the Malta National Symphony Orchestra.

In 1994 he formed the Malta Chamber Orchestra. Joachim Atanassov is also editor of a large number of pieces for Violin and for Orchestra.

With a daughter playing for the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and son playing in the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra, Mr and Mrs Atanassov are now domiciled in Rotorua.

The final orchestral tutti is interrupted by the cello leading the way from the ferment of the first movement to the sublime serenity of the second. The tranquility is short lived, but following another orchestral interlude the soloist restores peace and enters into a duet with the principal cellist accompanying him with sustained double stops. After sixteen bars – the longest peaceful episode in the entire work – the mood changes and moves towards the fiery animation of the third movement.

In the words of Pablo Casals it is “..... one of the finest works one can hear from beginning to end the music is sublime”.



INTERVAL



Symphony No 4 in A minor Opus. 120

Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)

Ziemlich langsam

Romanze

Scherzo and Trio

Langsam

Completed in 1841, Schumann's fourth symphony was not well received at its premier performance. Insecure about the merit of the composition, Schumann withdrew it, revised the orchestration and ten years later re-introduced the work, conducted by Felix Mendelsohn, as the Fourth Symphony, having written two others in the meantime.

The four-movement work follows the usual *fast-slow-fast* dance pattern and draws on many of the same melodic ideas throughout. The effect is more of a “symphonic fantasy” (as Schumann originally labeled the piece) than a classical symphony, with tensions set up early in the first movement not resolved until the end, half an hour later. Schumann indicated that the symphony should be performed uninterrupted by pauses, partly to discourage applause after every movement, but also to reinforce the idea that the symphony stands as a single, integrated whole.

The first movement corresponds to the common plan of a slow introduction followed by a faster main section. The second movement focuses on an intimate melody shared by the solo oboe and solo cello. The mood here is much more subdued, with material from the introduction of the first

solo cello. The mood here is much more subdued, with material from the introduction of the first movement being reintroduced. A middle section in D-major features solo violin and when the opening melody of the oboe and cello returns, the pair are joined by the solo bassoon, further darkening the sound and the mood.

The third movement Scherzo is a fast, violent, primitive dance followed by a serene trio, offering a complete change of character. The violins in the trio play a melody derived from the violin solo in the middle of the second movement, reinforcing the feeling of wishing for happier times. As the trio winds down, the melody gradually disintegrates and those members of the orchestra who are still playing get slower and quieter. Just as the music has reached the point of greatest mystery, the primary melodic fragment from the first movement returns in the violins. The trombones, who played only a few notes in the second movement and rested during the entire third, enter with great dignity, and the entire orchestra gradually swells up in sound. No sooner has the momentum been built up than it abruptly stops – but it is a false alarm, and the jubilant finale is under way.

The fourth movement has conflicts of its own, but none of the severity of what has passed, and the menacing fragment that dominated the first movement has been converted from D-minor to D-major. The end of the symphony features a series of faster and faster sections which never look back in their race to a triumphant conclusion.



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Joachim Atanassov

SOLOIST

Benjamin Nation

LEADER

James Carter

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 Jean Patterson
 Candy Swart
 John Burnett
 Janet Wilkins
 Beryl Wylde
 Hazel Martin
 Alison Rees
 Michelle Whrlich
 Sharon Stephens

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 Laura Marks
 Alison Ready
 Ray Littler
 Peter Stokes
 Christine Polglase
 Gabriel Wong
 Marylla Endert
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* denotes principal player